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## UNIT 8 MUṆḌAKA UPANIṢAD\*

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### 8.0 OBJECTIVES

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The highest teachings of the *Upaniṣads* are treasury of wisdom. For a long period of time it has been transmitted from competent guru to deserving disciples. In other words it was given as a teaching only in the Śravaṇa system where the students heard from the teacher and retained the treasure of knowledge. This unit:

- Will bring the students to the sublime teachings of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*.
- The aspirant seeking wisdom will be benefited to deepen one's understanding of the reality.
- The Brahma Vidyā, or the science of the Absolute is the aim of the teaching of *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*.

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### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

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*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* has evolved from the Atharva *Veda*. It is a highly mystical *Upaniṣad*. The term '*Muṇḍaka*' means shaven head. The teaching of the

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*Upaniṣad* shaves (liberates) the student from ignorance. The *Upaniṣad* has three chapters each being divided into two sections. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* contains about sixty verses. The first chapter deals with the greatness of the teaching and the tradition of the teaching in the first section. And the second section elaborates on the aparā Vidyā, lower knowledge of the ritual, mundane and secular activities.

The second chapter is concerned with establishing Brahman as the cause of the universe and cause and effect principle regarding *jīva* and jagat. The third chapter speaks of ways and means of attaining the knowledge of Self and Brahman and the instrumentality of such knowledge for liberation.

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## **8.2 PHILOSOPHY OF MUṆḌAKA UPANIṢAD**

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In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* Guru Angiras instructs the well known householder Śaunaka on “that knowledge on knowing which nothing remains to be known.” In *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* there is a systematic approach to the topic of knowledge of the Self through discrimination and dispassion. In *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* the knowledge of the Self is discussed elaborately and given a clear exposition. There is a clear distinction explained between higher knowledge of the Absolute and the lower knowledge of the empirical world. One can reach the Absolute only the higher knowledge, not by the lower knowledge of the world and rituals. The enquiry on the Self-Knowledge starts with the division of knowledge into parā and aparā vidyā. The details of aparā vidyā are treated elaborately well in the beginning.

The great lineage of gurūparamparā, master-disciple tradition down the ages, transmitted wisdom of self-enquiry. Brahman expounded the knowledge of the self. This was first taught to Atharva, his eldest son, a mānasa putra. From him the tradition of the guru-disciple starts. Atharva taught Angiras. He in turn taught Bharadwāja rishi who was known as satyavaha. Angiras Ṛṣi, the present teacher of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, learned from Satyavaha. He was approached by Shaunaka, who performed sacrifices and fed many people. He humbly places himself at the feet of the guru and asked, “O Master, please teach me about that one, by knowing which everything else is known.” The master explains that knowledge has two folds, Parā vidyā and aparā vidyā.

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## **8.3 APARĀ VIDYĀ – LOWER KNOWLEDGE**

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Aparā Vidyā is the first part of the four *Vedas*, namely, *Rk*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva Vedas* along with their six limbs or vedāngas [shiksha (phonetics), chandhas (prosody), vyākaraṇa (grammar), nirukta (etymology), kalpa (rituals), jyotiṣa (astrology)]. Knowledge of them is meant to acquire material gains. All the knowledge of the world comes under aparā vidyā, the science of the materials. The *Karma kāṇḍa* of the *Vedas* gives mainly science of various physical and material disciplines. The upāsanā section of the *Vedas* deals with mental oriented activities, like meditation. Both these physical and mental activities and the knowledge attained by them and for them are dealt as aparā vidyā. The knowledge of them leads any individual into the material ephemeral world. Each ritual blesses the individual with the benefit it gives. According to the *Upaniṣadic* seers the sacrificial works and their fruits mentioned in the Vedic mantras are true, if they are performed with faith.

## Agnihotra Ritual

A ritual called *agnihotra* is very popular and practiced daily. It is said to be a very efficacious time-tested ritual. It is certain that a person who performs is sure to be blessed by desired results. The *Upaniṣad* provides the description of this ritual, along with the deviations and carelessness that are to be avoided. The purpose of this description is to explain the intricacies of the dos and don'ts of the ritual. Even the location and the direction of the sacrifice are given.

The homa kuṇḍa, the fireplace, is to be prepared in between the northern and southern direction. The performer is to be seated facing the east. The rituals are to be carried out on the first moon day (*amāvasyā*), full-moon day, and the month beginning with *chāturmāsya* rituals. The desired results are based on the meticulous performance. The non-performance of these rituals would not lead to the desired results. Oblations can be offered only into properly lit flames. This ritual is of two types, depending on the type of results desired. First type of rituals is performed with the desired results to be fulfilled during the life of the person. The rituals aiming at the attainment of higher worlds, like *swarga* that would be fulfilled only after death belong to the second type. The *agnihotra* ritual represents all other rituals, social services, charitable works and prayer and pilgrims. If they are performed with desires they would surely benefit the person.

### Result of Ritual Performance

By presenting details of ritual performances and their merits, the *Upaniṣad* shows people to realize the fleeting nature of the worldly and heavenly pleasures. The limited and short lived results are not infinite. Many interpretations of the *Upaniṣad* suggest that those who think of the men of rituals as wise and torchbearers are regarded as unwise. Men of rituals who consider themselves as wise are like blind men leading blind people. The same rituals can be performed without much desired results by those who desire not any worldly pleasures. They would be led to the brighter path, *śuklagati*, attainment of *Brahmaloka*, and eventually the Self knowledge and liberation. Without this focus in ritual activity, the performer stays only in the transient and ephemeral world. The explanation of the ritual knowledge and action which is termed as *aparā vidyā*, limited knowledge leads us to knowledge of higher realms, namely *parā vidyā*.

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## 8.4 PARĀ VIDYĀ - KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF

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*Parā Vidyā*, as the knowledge of the Self through which the immortal is known. The self is the source of all beings. It is eternal, all pervading yet subtle, imperishable, unseen and unknown. *Parā Vidyā* takes one towards Absolute by ensuring purity of mind. The experience of gaining and parting with material things is painful. The enjoyment obtained through them is very short and unreal. The fleeting pain and pleasure makes one aware of the drawbacks of *aparā vidyā*. A sincere seeker looks for something that is free from all limitations.

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## 8.5 BRAHMAN: CAUSE OF THE UNIVERSE

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The second chapter in the first section speaks of Brahman as the cause of the universe. The Relationship of Brahman with the world is regarded as the relationship of cause and effect. Brahman is regarded as both material and

intelligent cause of the world, *nimitta kāraṇa* or *upādāna kāraṇa*. The example of spiders and the web is given to establish Brahman as the material cause of the world. Other examples are gold and ornaments, clay and the pot, the ocean and the wave. The *Upaniṣad* brings in also an example of fire and the sparks to illustrate the one cause and many effects. The nature of the fire such as heat and the light are also found in the sparks. The non essential qualities like name and shape, color are different in fire and the sparks. Similarly, Brahman is the one cause for the many effects such as the world. The essential nature of the Brahman and the world are the same but the non essentials may differ. As the spark goes back to the fire itself and it cannot manifest itself without fire, so also the world cannot manifest itself without the Brahman and it finally goes back to the Brahman.

Again in explaining the cause-effect relationship, the *Upaniṣad* says that the effect is always dependent upon the cause and the cause is independent. For its substance, emergence, existence and the resolution, the effect is ever dependent on the cause. Whereas the cause is independent substance for itself and self subsistent, the effects have no substance but only form, name, function and modification. Explaining further, the causal relation of conscious Brahman and the inert world, the example of the human body and its inert hair and the nails is given. In the previous illustration of fire and spark it is established that the relation is like that of material to material. Here the relation is between the conscious principle and the inert principle.

Brahman is the one cause and the effects are many. For the effect there is no independent existence, it is *mithyā*. Brahman exists independently and is the intelligent cause. Brahman is present all the time, during origin, existence and destruction. Brahman is the intelligent cause of the world and the world is inert, matter. Brahman is consciousness and lends its 'is'-ness to all the effects of the world. World cannot be separated from Brahman as no ornament is separate from its substance gold.

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## **8.6 THEORY OF CAUSALITY**

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In explaining the relation between universe and Brahman, it is stated that the cause is always present in the effect. *Satkāryavāda*, is the theory of causality that believed in the pre-existence of the effect in the cause. Before the manifestation of the universe the need of and knowledge of it has been visualized by the Brahman. The name and the form of the universe already existed in the potential form in the Brahman. In vedāntic terminology there is no actual evolution or creation of the world, but only the manifestation of the Brahman as the world. The world is not a creation of new things. The world comes into being only as a projection of the potential form. Thus, the world comes into existence in four stages; first the five elements, space, air, fire water and earth are projected. In the second stage, ego and mind are brought forth. Thirdly, the five gross elements are made by unification of subtle elements in certain proportions. Finally, the gross bodies are manifest.

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## **8.7 BRAHMAN – SOURCE OF ALL**

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The ritual performance of sacrifices prescribed in all *Vedas* also originated from Brahman. The *Upaniṣad* says that everything that is connected to the *yajña*, the

ritual has come from Brahman alone, the diksha, a type of grass, worn by the performer for rituals, his wife, the sacrificial fire, the post to tie the sacrificial animal, sacrificial materials, the fees, dakṣiṇa, the cow, etc. Even the merits of the performance, namely various worlds and the enjoyment of the benefits are also from the Brahman alone. The *Upaniṣad* further gives an account of other virtues and various forms of beings, like heavenly beings, gods of various orders, the injunctions for performance, faith in the scriptures and teachers, grains used in sacrifice, life force, cattle, birds, penance and devotion, instruments used in sacrifices and the code of conduct, all are said to have come from the same Brahman. The objects and the sensual experiences of two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, a mouth and a tongue are the effect of the Brahman. The oceans, all the mountains, rivers of every kind and herbs, all proceed from Him.

To explain further that the Ultimate is the source of all beings, the *Upaniṣad* gives three analogies, namely the spider and the web; Earth and its produces; human body and the parts of it. As the material and the intelligent cause of the web is the spider, for the universe to be caused, the Immortal becomes both intelligent and material cause; nimitta and upādāna kāraṇa. The earth is the one cause which produces a variety of plants and trees. Human body which is considered to be living and conscious produces inert hair and nails. There is no pain experienced when these are cut. Inert, unconscious things can be caused by Conscious principle. As there are varieties of effects from the single cause, Brahman, the consciousness projects the inert material world. As in the case of the Spider Brahman is both the material and intelligent cause of the Universe.

The universe before its manifestation as a variety of things, have been existing in the potential form in the Brahman himself. It was like a seed form potentially before its being tree. The Brahman visualized the world as *tapas (tapa)*, the knowledge of what and how to create the world. The creation is manifested as a swelling of the seed. Before sprouting the seed swells meaning that it is going to manifest its potential. The manifestation of the subtle world takes place first. The subtle world is compared to the tiny sprout. The gross world is the visible universe with the five elements known as space, fire, air, water and earth along with all planets.

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## **8.8 NATURE OF BRAHMAN**

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Brahman is defined as the Omniscient Principle from both parā and aparā vidyā. Attribute of the Brahman is said to be self effulgent and distinctively different from all other things. Brahman is formless, unborn, all pervading, residing in the heart of the body, existing within and without, unborn, undying and immortal. The name and form and function of the things are the forms of Brahman and they are substance less. They are found in the seed form, just as the lump of the clay or gold having all the names and forms of different pots or ornaments, but in an unmanifested potential form. The whole universe is considered to be the body of Brahman. Both the universe and human body function as one unit at the level of existence. The *Jīvas*, animals, birds, and other living beings are born out of Ívara by different processes of evolution. It is great and the supporter of all. All creatures that move and breathe are grounded in Brahman. The gross and the subtle, form and formless, are only Brahman. Brahman is sat, existence and cit, knowledge. Sat-Cit is the supporter of all beings, as is mentioned in

**Upanishadic  
Philosophy Core  
Themes-I**

other *Upaniṣads* (and not specifically in the *Muṇḍaka*). Brahman is said to be the rays of light. All the worlds are founded on this immortal Brahman as His attributes. The *prāṇa* of the external speech and the mind are only the expressions of Brahman. The entire creation with heavens, earth, the intermediary worlds are all based upon Brahman. The internal worlds, the mind, the *prāṇa* and the senses are founded on Brahman.

The nature of the self is that it is free from all limitations and it is eternal. One who controls the mind and sense and has discriminative knowledge of what is real and unreal, would be able to have the knowledge of the Self. Anyone whose minds are impure and whose visions are of an objective nature cannot realize Brahman.

Consciousness is understood neither as part or product of the body nor as limited by the body. It is the one that survives even after the death of the body. But without the body consciousness is not seen. Everybody consists of the original and reflected consciousness and they are inseparable. The original consciousness is one pervading all things. The reflected consciousness is known as *ahaṁkāra* or body consciousness. It is as many as the number of bodies. It is also subject to modification from body to body and even in the same body. The two manifestations of consciousness are compared to two birds of the same species sitting on a tree. A bird sitting on the lower branch eats fruits that are sweet and bitter. The other bird seated on the upper branch is watching. The body consciousness, the *jīvātmā* is enjoying the fruits where as the witness consciousness, the *paramātmā* is watching. The tree is mind body complex; the fruits are results of various actions, giving pleasure and pain. (III.1.1-2).

**Check Your Progress I**

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.  
b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Write a note on the various parts of *Vedas*.

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2. Write a note on the nature of Brahman.

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**8.9 NATURE OF ĀTMAN**

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Ātmā is understood as the witness principle. The ātmā is only one, though the thoughts are many. The consciousness that is Awareness handles the thoughts

single-handed. The thoughts are not awareness, though it is perceived in the presence of Awareness. Like the heart as the hub from where all nerves emerge and spread out over the whole body, the mind rests in the heart and in the mind thoughts arise as well awareness, which is witness to the ātmā. Ātmā is a silent witness of the three states of consciousness. The heart is the vital centre. Many faculties and attributes are centered in the heart.

The ātmā is like the leader giving its power to the mind and becomes the life of the body and guides the vital air and the body. Finally at the fall of this body, it enters into another gross

Through the eye of knowledge it is recognized as witness, consciousness, by the competent and a pure one. Just as the sense organs are able to recognize the objects in the constant presence of light, the mind depends on the light of another source, Awareness. Consciousness is the light of all lights that illumines all other lights. This light of consciousness is located in the mind. Brahman is that witness- consciousness. “The sun does not shine there, neither the moon nor the stars, nor the lightning and much less the fire. When It shines, everything shines after it. By it alone all the lights are illumined.”(II.2.10) similarly, the Ātmā illumines all, but not illumined by anything. The sense organs and mind cannot illumine the Ātmā, but the Ātmā illumines them all. The sense organs illumine external objects from borrowed light of Awareness-Consciousness, the Ātmā. “I, the Ātmā, am the conscious being and every other thing is not’ is the idea of the verse II.2.11.

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## 8.10 IDENTITY OF JĪVA AND BRAHMAN

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The *jīvātmā* is defined as the one and the same with paramātmā. The example of an arrow and bow is given to show the identity. The arrow is Jīvātmā and the target being the Brahman. The scriptures are compared to the bow. The teacher is the unity of the arrow with the bow and the target. The practice of *sādhana* is sharpening of the arrow, keeping it straight and pulling back the string to hit the target. Keeping the arrow straight on the bow is known as *arjavam* that is consistency in thoughts, speech and action. Pulling back of the string is like withdrawing inwardly. Sharpening of the arrow is to keep the intellect sharp through meditation. The focused attention on the target till the arrow is released is to become one with the target and keeping aside the erroneous notion of separation from Brahman. When the arrow becomes one with the mark, the person who aims at it has success. Similarly the aspirant who meditates on Brahman attains success or attains the fruits of meditation. Ātmā is said to be composed of both consciousness. When *jīva* wakes up to the higher consciousness there is freedom. The Brahman is both, *swarūpa lakṣaṇam* and *taṣastha lakṣaṇam*, original consciousness and witness consciousness. At the individual level it is a *śakṣī*, witness and at the world level it is Brahman.

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## 8.11 REALIZATION OF BRAHMAN

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The *Upaniṣad* invites its hearers to know Brahman to be the Self of all. There is no word other than Brahman. The teacher says, “This is Self-knowledge – the Ātmā and other words are to be discarded in the attempt to attain immortality, to cross the ocean of *samsāra*.” Goal of life is to know this Brahman. The Brahman is near and moving in the cave of the heart. Hearing, *śravanam*, reflection,

mananam, and contemplation, nididhyāsanam have been taught to realize the Brahman.

Creation is the glory of Brahman and it alone appears in creation, vibhūti. Brahman is discernible in the temple of the body, in the heart, as consciousness which is pure bliss and immortal. In this way the immortal Ātmā is seen and worshipped. The body is compared to a temple and the heart is the holy of holies, garbha gr̥ha, where Ātmā resides, which is the *jīvātmā* body. The ātmā is all pervading. The body is the reflecting medium where the ātmā shines forth more clearly. (II.2.8)

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## **8.12 MEANS OF REALIZATION**

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The disciplines are truthfulness, avoidance of speaking untruth, penance, tapas, sexual chastity, brahmacharya, proper enquiry through śāstra and gurū, samyak *Jñānam*. The enquiry of the self is fruitful only when the mind is free from impurities. The virtue of speaking the truth is given much importance. The famous phrase of *Satyameva jayate* is that truth alone triumphs. (III.1.2-6). Speaking the truth is absolutely necessary for liberation and attainment of brahmaloka, through the bright path, śukla gati. It is the basic tenet for meditation. The essence of this teaching is that without relative truth, the Absolute Truth, Brahman cannot be realized. Sharp intellect to cognize subtle elements is necessary. Nature of Ātmā is that it is infinite, limitless, self evident, inconceivable, most subtle farther, nearer and sat and cit. To know this subtle element of Ātmā, sharp intellect is needed.

What can reveal the Brahman and what cannot reveal it are narrated in the *Upaniṣad*. The eyes, words cannot reveal. Sense organs are not able to recognize the subtle element of Ātman. Tapas, rituals and other actions too cannot help in knowing Brahman. They may be useful in preparing the mind and sense organs towards purity and subtlety. Ātmā can be revealed only by the Śruti. To assimilate what is taught by scriptures the mind must be suitable and well prepared. The mind cleansed of desires and aversion and is well refined and tuned to subtlety alone can know the indivisible, pure and subtle Brahman. The subtle mind recognizes the subtle Brahman.

The Knower of the Self is glorified as he has recognized the Infinite Brahman as the substratum of the entire creation and knows that I am that Infinite Brahman. The jñānī worships Him without any desire for materialistic pleasures. And he attains immortality. The jñānī imparts spiritual knowledge to the aspirant systematically that leads to liberation. Self knowledge destroys rebirth and leads to liberation. Desire leads to action and the result of actions goes to character and that makes one obsessed with during the time of death that decides the next birth. A jñānī has no desire to be fulfilled and such desirelessness leads to liberation from rebirth.

The requirements to know and realize the Ātmā are the intense desire along with study of scriptures, intelligence and retention power. The thirst for final emancipation, the intense yearning and a burning desire for the object and prepared for any sacrifice to attain it. paramātmā reveals the knowledge only to the sincere seeker. Actually liberation is not a thing to be achieved as it is already there. The ignorance has to be dispelled to realize the very nature of

one is the Ātmā. The will power, alertness, austerity and determination and detachment are the fourfold qualification for realization.

The benefits of this knowledge of the Self is destruction of ignorance and clarity of the meaning of *Jīva* and jagat and Īśvara and finally the freedom from the clutches of *Karma*, pāpam and puṇyam, that result in the cycle of birth and death. The benefits of this knowledge are the freedom in two stages, jīvan mukti and videha mukti. The freedom while living in the body and freedom obtained at or after death. The process is in various stages. It starts with recognition of the fact that the spiritual goal is the ultimate, and getting detached and being tranquil, acquiring knowledge, understanding the identity and attaining *jīvan* mukti, continuing in the knowledge without slipping down. And finally merging with all pervading Brahman, The jīvan mukta has essentially the following nature, jñāna triptaḥ, satisfied with the knowledge, kriyātmānaḥ who has realized the ātmā, vītarāgaḥ, devoid of attachment, sarvaga, all pervading, dhīra, the wise.

To become a jñānī, purifying the mind with balance of mind and becoming a committed pursuer of knowledge. The merging of the individual soul into the total is compared to the fifteen parts of the moon. The causal and subtle body gets merged into one. The three types of *Karma*, sañcita, āgāmī and prārabdha are merged into Īśvara. The example of rivers merging into the ocean is given to explain this. Though different in names, forms and sizes, the rivers get merged and become only water in the ocean. So also the *jīvas*, though different in name and form are essentially one and the same when they merge into the One. An important note is that terms like “parmātmā, pāpa, videha-mukti are largely taken from other interpretations and are not originally given in the text.

### Check Your Progress II

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.  
b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What is the relation between *Jīvātmā* and *Paramātmā*?

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2. What are the preparations to *BrahmaVidyā*?

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## 8.13 LET US SUM UP

The teaching of the *Upaniṣad* focuses on fulfilling the human quest for knowledge of everything that is knowable. Anything that is namable and knowable. Whatever

is reality can be knowable. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* quenches the perennial search for knowledge. It says all the search for wisdom culminates and reaches its summit in attaining BrahmaVidyā. Among innumerable objectives of life, human beings are given an ultimate choice of knowing the reality, knowing which everything that can be known would be known.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* classifies all knowledge into parā and aparā, higher and lower. The aparā knowledge is described well as positive knowledge about the changeful many. All science, art, literature, politics, and economics all belong to this category. The knowledge of vedic rituals and all related to it belongs to aparā. It proclaims one's knowledge as parā. The knowledge by which the imperishable changeless reality of the one behind all is realized is parā. The *Upaniṣad* upholds the given merits of ritual practices and then turns the other side of them. Having explained the limitedness of aparā vidyā, the *Upaniṣad* goes to describe the nature of parā vidyā. A transition is said to be a transition from knowledge of the material to the spiritual and from the unreal to real.

Brahman is both material and intelligent cause of the world, nimitta kāraṇam or upādāna kāraṇam. Brahman is one and the world is many. As the essence of them is the same, the non-essentials like form and name are different. Also the world cannot manifest itself without the Brahman and it finally goes back to the Brahman. In the last chapter the identity between the jīvātmā and paramātmā are explained and the preparatory disciplines to realize the identity. And the benefits of such realization are spelt out as being *jīvan mukti* and *videha mukti*. Consciousness the witness is talked of with the ahamkara as the body consciousness. The *Upaniṣad* enumerates the identity of *Jīva* and Brahman as a single entity. The identity of Brahman and Ātmān is well defined in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*. Parāmātmā, the Brahman is without any impurity and it is without part and division. The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. When the ignorance is removed, one realizes it. It is not one becoming another, but realizing what one is. It is like one is already Brahman but ignorant about it. Knowledge removes ignorance and realization is possible.

The *Upaniṣad* concludes saying that this teaching was given thousands of years ago by the teacher Angiras to Śaunaka Maharṣi. Though ancient, it is relevant and beneficial for all who seek the truth.

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## 8.14 KEY WORDS

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- Mithyā** : Mithya's root is 'Mith.' As given by Apte Sanskrit Online dictionary, Mith means to associate with; to unite; to hurt; to understand; to wrangle; to grasp.
- Śāstra** : Śāstra in Sanskrit means that which gives teaching, instruction or command. For instance, tarka śāstra is a science of dialectics, logic and reasoning, and art of debate that analyzes the nature and source of knowledge and its validity.

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## 8.15 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## 8.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Aparā Vidyā is the first part of the four *Vedas*, namely, *R̥k*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva Vedas* along with their six limbs. Knowledge of them is meant to acquire material gains. All the knowledge of the world comes under aparā vidyā, the science of the materials. The *Karma kāṇḍa* of the *Vedas* gives mainly science of various physical and material disciplines. The upāsanā section of the *Vedas* deals with mental oriented activities, like meditation. Both these physical and mental activities and the knowledge attained by them and for them are dealt as aparā vidyā. The knowledge of them leads any individual into the material ephemeral world. Each ritual blesses the individual with the benefit it gives. According to the *Upaniṣadic* seers the sacrificial works and their fruits mentioned in the Vedic mantras are true, if they are performed with faith.
2. Brahman is defined as the Omniscient Principle from both parā and aparā vidyā. Attribute of the Brahman is said to be self effulgent and distinctively different from all other things. Brahman is formless, unborn, all pervading, residing in the heart of the body, existing within and without, unborn, undying and immortal. The name and form and function of the things are the forms of Brahman and they are substance less. They are found in the seed form, just as the lump of the clay or gold having all the names and forms of different pots or ornaments, but in an unmanifested potential form. The whole universe is considered to be the body of Brahman. Both the universe and human body function as one unit at the level of existence. The *Jīvas*, animals, birds, and other living beings are born out of Īśvara by different processes of evolution. It is great and the supporter of all. All creatures that move and breathe are grounded in Brahman. The gross and the subtle, form and formless, are only Brahman. Brahman is sat, existence and cit, knowledge. Sat-cit is the supporter of all beings. Brahman is said to be the rays of light. All the worlds are founded on this immortal Brahman as His attributes. The prāṇa of the external speech and the mind are only

the expressions of Brahman. The entire creation with heavens, earth, the intermediary worlds are all based upon Brahman. The internal worlds, the mind, the prāṇa and the senses are founded on Brahman.

### **Answers to Check Your Progress II**

1. The jīvātmā is defined as the one and the same with paramātmā. The example of an arrow and bow is given to show the identity. The arrow is Jīvātmā and the target being the Brahman. The scriptures are compared to the bow. The teacher is the unity of the arrow with the bow and the target. The practice of sādhanā is sharpening of the arrow, keeping it straight and pulling back the string to hit the target. Keeping the arrow straight on the bow is known as arjavam, that is consistency in thoughts, speech and action. Pulling back of the string is like withdrawing inwardly. Sharpening of the arrow is to keep the intellect sharp through meditation and to keep the intellect sharp through mediation. The focused attention on the target till the arrow is released is to become one with the target and keeping aside the erroneous notion of separation from Brahman. When the arrow becomes one with the mark, the person who aims at it has success. Similarly the aspirant who meditates on Brahman attains success or attains the fruits of meditation. Ātmā is said to be composed of both consciousness. When jīva wakes up to the higher consciousness there is freedom. The Brahman is both swarūpa lakṣaṇam and taṣṭha lakṣaṇam, original consciousness and witness consciousness. At the individual level it is a sakshi, witness and at the world level it is Brahman.
2. The disciplines are truthfulness, avoidance of speaking untruth, penance, tapas, sexual chastity, brahmacharya, proper enquiry through śāstra and guru, *samyak Jñānam*. The enquiry of the self is fruitful only when the mind is free from impurities. The virtue of speaking the truth is given much importance. The famous phrase of Satyameva jayate is that truth alone triumphs. (III.1.2-6). Speaking the truth is absolutely necessary for liberation and attainment of brahmaloka, through the bright path, śukla gati. It is the basic tenet for meditation. The essence of this teaching is that without relative truth, the Absolute Truth, Brahman cannot be realized. Sharp intellect to cognize subtle elements is necessary. Nature of Ātmā is that it is infinite, limitless, self evident, inconceivable, most subtle farther, nearer and sat and cit. To know this subtle element of Ātmā, sharp intellect is needed.

What can reveal the Brahman and what cannot reveal it are narrated in the *Upaniṣad*. The eyes, words cannot reveal. Sense organs are not able to recognize the subtle element of Ātman. Tapas, rituals and other actions too cannot help in knowing Brahman. They may be useful in preparing the mind and sense organs towards purity and subtlety. Ātmā can be revealed only by the Śruti. To assimilate what is taught by scriptures the mind must be suitable and well prepared. The mind cleansed of desires and aversion and is well refined and tuned to subtlety alone can know the indivisible, pure and subtle Brahman. The subtle mind recognizes the subtle Brahman.